



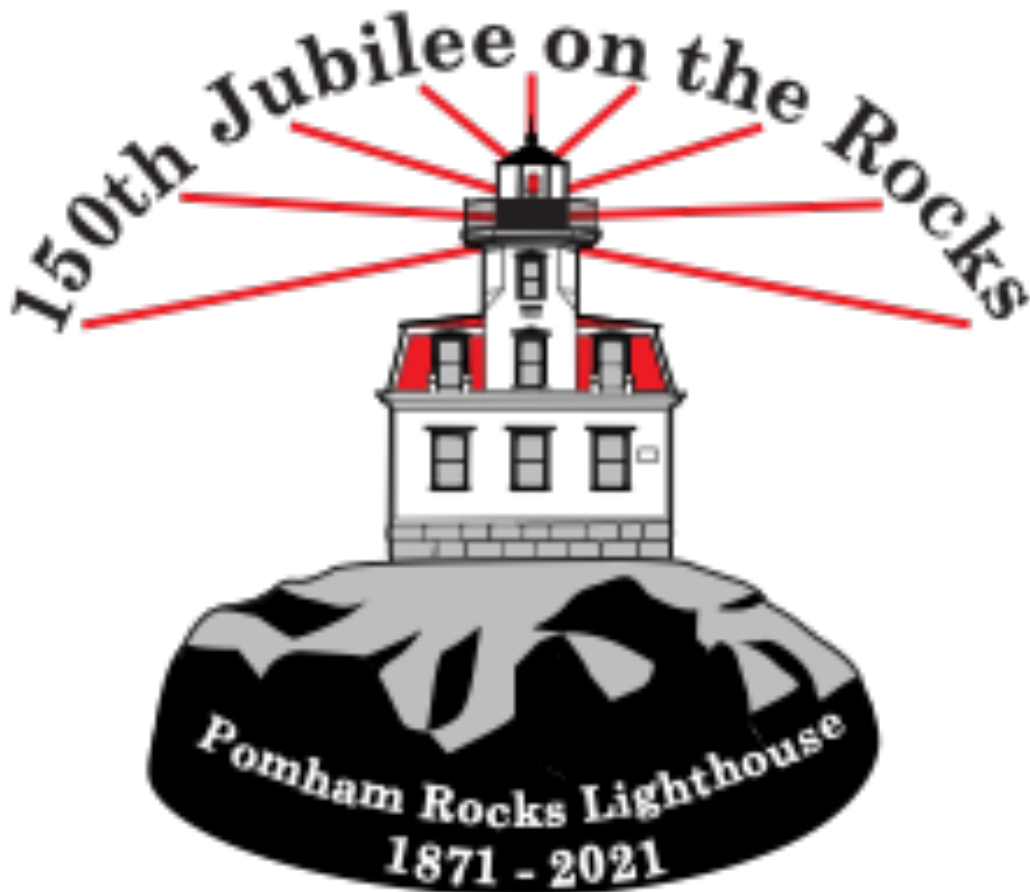
THE POMHAM GLOW

Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse,
A Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation
Mission Statement

To ensure the historic restoration and preservation of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and to improve public awareness, appreciation and access to Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

March 2021

POMHAM ROCKS CELEBRATES ITS 150TH



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

2021 is certainly an exciting and remarkable year for Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. 150 years ago, on December 1st, 1871, Pomham Rocks Lighthouse began its mission of guiding shipping along the Providence River with its steadfast red beacon. In 150 years, the Lighthouse has seen its share of changing technology in the ships and boats that pass by and rely on the Lighthouse's beacon. From wooden sailing ships and steam powered paddlewheelers to reciprocating steam engine powered ships to the diesel, steam turbine or gas turbine powered ships of today. The Lighthouse has seen the World War Two liberty ships built in Providence and Cranston sailing by to join the war effort. More recently, the Lighthouse has seen the I-way bridge span being brought up to Providence by barge and later, the wind turbines on their way to build the only offshore wind farm in the United States. The Lighthouse itself has seen a vast difference in technology starting with lard oil to light the beacon transitioning to kerosene and later incandescent lamps when electricity was finally brought to the island in the mid-

1950s. Today, the Lighthouse has the latest lighting technology by way of the LED beacon powered by solar panels. The heating of the Lighthouse has gone from coal stoves to kerosene stoves to an oil-fired furnace for hot water radiators to the electric heat that it has today.

From 1871-1939, Pomham was manned by U.S. Lighthouse Service lightkeepers and their families, some serving for nearly 30 years. In 1939, U.S. Coast Guard personnel took the reins to finish out the "manned" years until the Lighthouse's automation and decommissioning in 1974. Civilian caretakers lived in the building until 1980, when the Lighthouse was finally abandoned. In 2004, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse was formed and began the long, arduous, and expensive process of restoring the very dilapidated lighthouse back to its former glory and beauty.

All our past and present members, and supporters should be immensely proud of the part they have played and continue to play with the restoration and the ongoing care and maintenance of this beautifully restored lighthouse. Without your continued efforts

and support, we would not be celebrating this momentous milestone - the 150th year anniversary of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse! I also recognize the remarkable dedication and efforts of our Board of Directors and past Chairmen. They all worked tirelessly to restore Pomham to its original condition.

In this very special 150th anniversary year, I cannot help but look back on my own personal involvement with Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. In 1971, the year of the Lighthouse's 100th anniversary, I reported to Pomham as a young Coast Guardsman to start my over three-year tour there. I met my future wife there in Riverside and raised a family of three wonderful children. I eventually returned to Pomham in 2016 to resume my experiences there in time to have the privilege of being involved with the electrical and interior restorations. Today, as Chairman of the Board of Directors, I feel very honored to once again be charged with the care of the Lighthouse. To say the least, my years with Pomham Rocks has been a life-changing experience and it is a great privilege to continue caring for this historic landmark.

Please join us this year as we celebrate the remarkable history of the last surviving lighthouse on the Providence River. As described in this newsletter, we have several events planned to honor the Jubilee year of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. It is our sincerest wish that you come and celebrate with us.

~ *Dennis Tardiff, Chairman*



POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE CELEBRATES 150TH JUBILEE ON THE ROCKS

How do you celebrate a 150th birthday? With special events all year long, and of course, plenty of cake. Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, in Riverside, marks its 150th jubilee in 2021. Rhode Islanders of all ages

and lighthouse lovers from far and near are invited to join in the celebration. Built in 1871 and perched on an island off the coast of Riverside, RI, Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is the last surviving lighthouse in upper Narragansett Bay.

To kick off this special year, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is holding a photography and art contest in March. Details are included in another article in this newsletter.

Lace up your sneakers for the first Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Run on April 24. See more information in the article on the benefit run elsewhere in the newsletter.

A series of commemorative events will honor the many dedicated lighthouse keepers who kept the light burning to ensure the safety of passing vessels. The first graveside ceremony and dedication honors Pomham's first lighthouse keeper, Charles.H. Salisbury and his wife, Mary, who served from 1871 to 1893. Representatives from the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Town of Warren and City of East Providence will take part in the program at Warren's South Burial Ground in June.

Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Day will be the highlight of the year for the community. If Covid guidelines allow, all are invited to the celebration on August 8 from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Squantum Association, 947 Veterans Memorial Parkway, Riverside, RI. Displays and video presentations will inform the public about the history of this important light station. Birthday cake will be served, and free boat rides and tours of the lighthouse will be available. Food, music, raffles and games on the lawn will be featured.

Boat rides and tours of the Lighthouse museum will be offered during the summer season, if allowed by pandemic guidelines. Plans are also underway to commemorate the initial lighting of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse on December 1, 2021. To find out more about events planned for the jubilee year or to register for the Lighthouse Run, visit www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org.

POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE**PHOTO/ART CONTEST**

As part of a year-long celebration of the 150th Jubilee of East Providence's historic landmark, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is sponsoring a photography and art contest. Entry is free. Entrants can submit photos (black and white or color) or pieces of artwork (colored or graphite pencil, ink, pastel, charcoal, or other) depicting the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

Anyone age 18 or older may submit an entry. Participants may submit up to two (2) photographs or two (2) visual arts entries via email at lighthouse1871@cox.net. Submit entry as a jpeg or pdf file. A committee of five judges, including a professional photographer, a professional illustrator and members of Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse will review entries and select the top three winners in the photograph and the visual arts categories. Winners will be notified in April. Prizes include one-year memberships in the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, trips to the Lighthouse, and Pomham Rocks Lighthouse merchandise.

All submissions will be considered for publication in a 2022 wall calendar and for use on Lighthouse gift shop merchandise.

Complete contest rules are posted on Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse website, at www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org. Entry period begins on March 1, 2021 and ends on March 30, 2021.

RUN FOR THE LIGHTHOUSE

To commemorate the 150th Jubilee of The Lighthouse, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is sponsoring a benefit run on Saturday, April 24, 2021. Organized by Rhode Races & Events, the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Run will start and end at Rose Larisa Park, 701 Bullocks Point Avenue, Riverside, across from Crescent Park Carousel. It will wind through scenic neighborhoods and will be followed by refreshments at the Park. There will be three race options: 5K walk, 5K and 10K runs. Participants of all ages are welcome, as are both novice and experienced runners and walkers. As a precaution in these uncertain times, and to ensure the safety of all participants, a virtual component to the run

is also available. If Covid restrictions prevent the in-person event as planned, or if you can't take part in person on April 24, but still want to support this landmark light station and museum, run or walk at your choice of time and place, by registering for the virtual event.

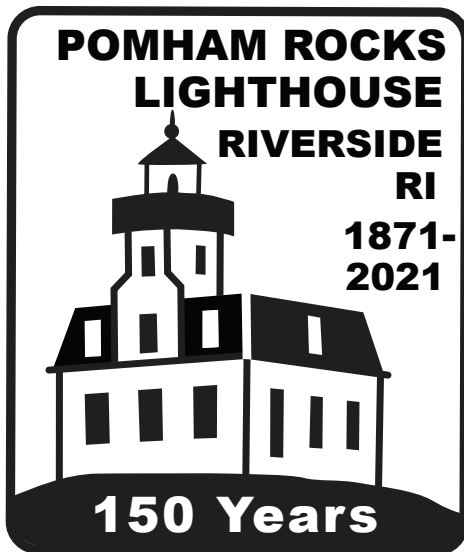
The 5K Run/Walk, from 8:30 to 9:45 a.m., will proceed up Bullocks Point Avenue, then wind through local neighborhoods adjacent to the coastline, continue on the East Bay Bike Path, back up to the starting point. The 10K Run, from 8:00am to 10:00 a.m., heads toward Squantum Woods, and includes a portion of the East Bay Bike Path, from which runners have a sweeping view of The Lighthouse, before returning to Rose Larisa Park. The price for the virtual 5K or 10K run or walk is \$20. Runners and walk enthusiasts can see further details and register for the in-person or the virtual event at www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org.



COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Along with all the other festivities going on this year to celebrate Pomham Rocks' 150th, a new passport stamp has been designed to be used to commemorate the year. This stamp is now the second for Pomham Rocks and will continue to be used even after this year is over for everyone who loves to collect these stamps on their Lighthouse passport. The passport book itself is also for sale upon a trip to the lighthouse. Both the original stamp and the new commemorative stamp are available at the lighthouse during tours, or by contacting

us through mail at P.O. Box 15121 Riverside, RI 02915, with a donation enclosed as well as something you'd like to be stamped.



150th Commemorative Stamp

COVID 19 UPDATE

The Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is closely monitoring the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our organization must comply with Reopening Rhode Island guidelines, Phase III, thus affecting our planning for tours and events. At this time, with the uncertainty of the

upcoming tour season, the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse have not planned any public tours for the 2021 season. Please check our website, www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org For updates.

LIGHTHOUSE WINS \$25,000

CHAMPLIN GRANT

On November 19, 2020, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse received word that the Distribution Committee of The Champlin Foundation had approved a grant in the amount of \$25,000 to support our request for assistance in purchasing our new Launch. Purchased at a cost of \$155,755 in September 2019 to provide better access to the island Lighthouse, the newly built Launch was delivered to us in the spring of 2020. The special fundraising effort to pay for the purchase of the Launch had fallen \$25,000 short at the time of delivery of the Launch, and this shortfall was covered with a short-term interest free loan in the same amount. The Champlin grant was used to pay off this loan and the Launch is now fully paid for.

This is the second grant we have received from Champlin – the first being a 2013 \$50,000 grant that was used to help pay for the cost of restoring the exterior of the Lighthouse.

As Director of Development, Nate Chace, said in thanking Champlin for its generosity to, and confidence in, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, “This is the second time that The Champlin Foundation has stepped up to the plate to assist us, and our success in restoring and maintaining one of The Jewels of Narragansett Bay is attributable in no small part to The Champlin Foundation.”

BE A LIGHTHOUSE FRIEND

The year 2021 will be a most exciting time for Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, as it marks its 150th anniversary. Events are being planned throughout the year for members and the community to celebrate this jubilee year.

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to renew your membership. Members will have an opportunity to be actively involved in planning and participating in commemorative events. As a member, you

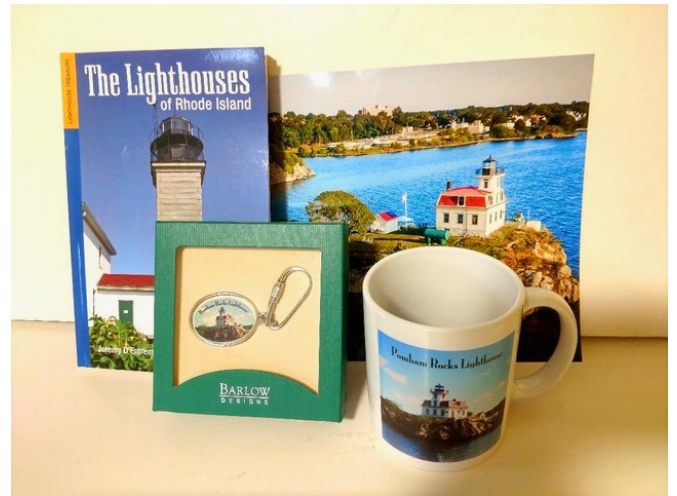
will receive a subscription to *Pomham Glow* newsletter, to keep you informed of programs and activities. Also, members have the privilege of a discounted rate on boat trips to the lighthouse and invitation to members-only events. Share your enthusiasm with friends and neighbors and invite them to join as well. Memberships make excellent gifts for birthdays and anniversaries.

For just \$30, you can join as a Lighthouse Keeper (individual membership), or for \$15, Assistant Keeper (student membership). Surprise the whole family with a Keeper Family membership (for those who live in the same household) for \$50. Or provide additional support for East Providence's historic Lighthouse by purchasing family membership at select levels: \$75 for Lighthouse Lampist, \$100 for Lighthouse Inspector, \$250 for Lighthouse Superintendent or \$500 for Commissioner of Lighthouse Service. Corporate memberships are also available at \$250. Memberships are renewable annually. The membership year is from January 1 to December 31. Membership at these select levels will also

receive special gifts: an 8" x 10" color photo of the Lighthouse for Lampist; photo and Pomham Rocks Lighthouse boxed keychain for Inspector; photo, keychain and mug for Inspector; and photo, keychain, mug and a copy of the book, *Rhode Island Lighthouses*, for the Commissioner level. Whatever level you choose, you will feel the personal satisfaction in knowing that your gift membership assists with the support and preservation of this historic maritime light station and museum.

Renew now by sending a check, made payable to Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, to Membership Chair, Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, P.O. Box 15121, Riverside, RI 02915. Your membership package, including a membership card, newsletter, lighthouse sticker and special gifts will be sent to you. New members are encouraged to provide their email and phone number. This will provide us a with way to contact you with announcements that can't wait for the next periodic Pomham Glow Newsletter. If you have recently become a new member and did not provide that contact information, or have

any other questions, please email us at pomhamrockslighthouse@yahoo.com



BOAT STATUS

Our 18' secondary boat, LiL'Pomham remains on standby in our storage area and is used for winter access to the Lighthouse. The 26' Lady Pomham II passenger launch has been wintering where it was built in 2020 at Crosby Yachts, Osterville, Massachusetts. The launch was returned to Crosby last October so a mandatory U.S. Coast Guard conducted stability test could be completed. While the launch was back with Crosby for the winter, the FPRL Board of Directors voted to have a bow thruster installed. A bow thruster is used to aid with maneuvering the Lady Pomham II into and out of its tight slip and with docking at the Lighthouse as

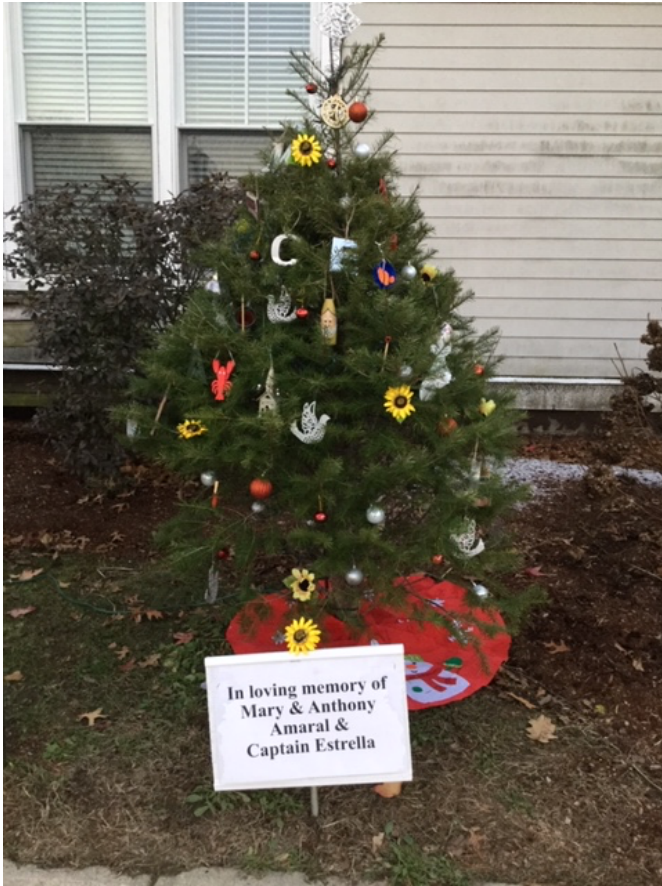
needed. We expect the launch to be returned to us in April to start service to the Lighthouse for work parties and tours once the Reopening Rhode Island restrictions lift enough to permit the tours to start up.

WINTERFEST

As what has been an ongoing tradition for Pomham Rocks, we once again set up a tree at the East Providence Senior Center for 2020's Winterfest. Here is a photo of the Pomham tree at the Senior Center decorated with ornaments made by members. There were still plenty of trees lined up on the lawn this past year despite the pandemic, including a tree in remembrance of former Chairman Joseph Estrella put up by his family. You can always use your creativity to come help us decorate our 150th tree come December for this year's Winterfest.



Pomham's Winterfest Tree



Tree in memorial of Joseph Estrella

WORK PARTIES

This year is shaping up to be a memorable one as we celebrate 150 years of the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

Last season, volunteers helped restore the cellar back to its original condition. The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the delayed arrival of the Lady Pomham II, shortened our season. The challenges of the pandemic did not deter the volunteers as they adapted to new regulations and health

precautions. This year, the pandemic will still have an impact on how work parties are conducted.

In keeping with our mission to restore and preserve the grounds to its 19th century charm, various projects are planned. Staff from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission visited the Lighthouse in fall 2020 to review and approve of our plans. The major task of the season will be the removal of the c.1956 2,000-gallon oil tank on the north side of the lighthouse. When this tank is fully removed, it will restore a view of the lighthouse not seen in 65 years. Other projects include the restoration of the original 1871 stone walls on the island, landscaping at the east end of the island, brush cutting and general housekeeping.



As mentioned, the pandemic will have an effect on work parties this season. The capacity on the launch will be restricted, social distancing will be observed, and masks will be worn at all times (including on the launch the grounds and inside the lighthouse). We are cautiously optimistic that we can loosen some of these restrictions as the year progresses and the situation hopefully improves.

If you are interested in volunteering under these restrictions and health precautions, please select work parties on your membership renewal form or contact Alex Dias at workparty@pomhamrockslighthouse.org

STORIES FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE

STORY 2: THE EARLY YEARS

What a time for a lighthouse to be born on the Providence River! In 1870, the United States Congress had approved \$20,000 for the first three lighthouses to be built – Pomham Rocks, Sassafras Point, and Fuller Rock. The other two sister lighthouses – Bullocks Point and Sabin Point - came into

being soon after. All five had their lights glowing by 1876.

You might wonder, why were there five lighthouses just off the shore of Riverside? If you asked any one of the Five Sisters, they would quickly say, “The ships! Ships are why lighthouses exist. They need our lights, bells and foghorns to help them safely to Providence Harbor.”

Steamships were the fastest ships in those days and ocean travel was getting cheaper. People with dreams of a better life were coming by the thousands from Ireland, Italy, and Portugal to work in our textile mills and jewelry companies. By 1880, Rhode Island made 1/4 of all the jewelry made in the United States, and it was beautiful jewelry indeed. There were 7000 jewelry workers, and many of their families lived in East Providence.



*Passenger Steamer New Shoreham passes Pomham
Light circa 1900*

The lighthouses were so proud to welcome these new immigrants. But with more people came the need for more things – Big Things! The lighthouses worked hard in those days, guiding big commercial steamers carrying tons of granite to build the Providence City Hall, Georgia marble for the State House, iron for the Point Street Bridge, brownstone for the Cathedral, and thousands of bricks for Union Station. Coal ships and oil barges glided past the lighthouses, bringing tons of fuel for the new industries.

As if the big commercial ships were not enough to worry about, there was the also the booming tourist business. Riverside had become a popular summer colony, and the Providence River was the gateway from Providence to all the fun places on the River

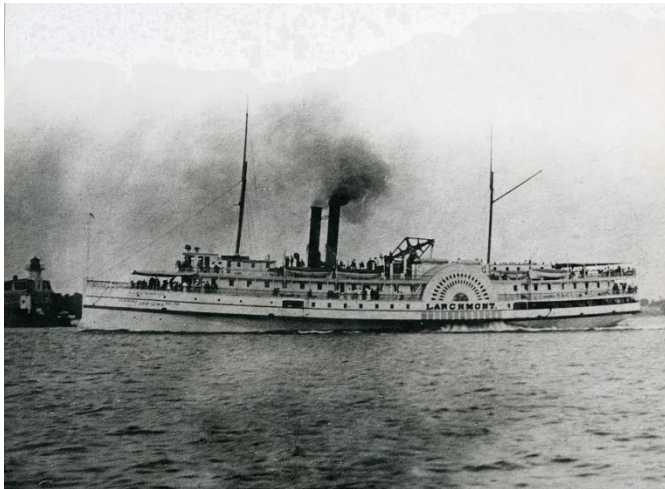
and out to Narragansett Bay. The Five Sister lighthouses witnessed hundreds of boats carrying passengers to enjoy elegant times at the Pomham Club in Riverside, to go swimming at

Sabin Point, to feast on shore dinners at Silver Spring, and take thrilling rides at Crescent Park. By 1890, there were trains going to Riverside, but many folks still loaded up on steamboats, sailboats, rowboats, canoes or anything else that could float to reach the resorts and amusement spots - both day and night. Sometimes the lighthouses were worried sick as they sounded their horns and bells to warn those careless boaters to take care and to avoid the giant ships and barges who were “in their way”!



*The steamer Petrel (built in East Providence) full
of sightseers at Silver Springs Wharf circa 1890*

Speaking of foghorns, Pomham Rocks Lighthouse was so proud when she got hers installed 1900. When the first fog rolled in, her horn sounded good and loud. But she soon realized it was a continuous horn that would not stop until the fog lifted. The neighbors complained. The boat operators complained. The local paper called it “The Greatest Nuisance in the State!” Fortunately, it was changed to three blasts every 12 seconds. Then, after more complaints, a fog bell replaced the horn in 1903.



*The paddlewheeler Larchmont passes Sabin Point
Light circa 1890*

Photo Courtesy of Providence Public Library

Well, it certainly wasn't easy to be a lighthouse in the late 1800's. At the same time, for The Five Sisters, it was the most exciting time they could ever have imagined.

Join them for our next story, *Lighting the Way*, where you hear about the early light keepers, life in a lighthouse, and some exciting rescues!

EVENTS

- March 1st, 2021 – March 31st, 2021: Photo/Art Contest Entry Period
- April 24th, 2021: 5K/10K Road Race
Run/Walk times runs from 8:00am – 10am
- August 8th, 2021: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Day
At Squantum Association from 12:00pm – 3:00pm
(COVID-19 Permitting)
- December 1st, 2021: 150th Anniversary of The First Lighting of
Pomham Rocks Lighthouse

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